



**BEST PRACTICES  
CLEARINGHOUSE**

- Lessons from the Field -

## **Strategies for Educators and School-Based Staff to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Well-Being and Success**

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*Wednesday, October 4, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET*  
*SPEAKER BIOS*

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### **Carlette KyserPegram**

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Equity and Discretionary Grants and Support Services, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, United States Department of Education



Ms. Carlette KyserPegram is an Education Program Specialist at the US Department of Education in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Safe and Supportive Schools where she serves as the lead for the School Climate Transformation (SCT) group. The work of the SCT groups embraces a variety of topics relative to student health, safety, and overall student well-being including school based mental health, violence prevention, school climate, emergency preparedness, environmental health, and human trafficking. Prior to working in OESE, Ms. KyserPegram worked in the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education and prior to then was a high school English, Language and Linguistics, and Literary Studies teacher.

## Dr. Brandi Simonsen

Co-Director, Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Co-Director, Center for Behavioral Education and Research, University of Connecticut



Dr. Brandi Simonsen is a professor of Special Education in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. She is also a Co-Director of the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS; [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)), Co-Principal Investigator of the National Multi-Tiered System of Supports Research Network (MTSS-RN; [www.mtss.org](http://www.mtss.org)), and Senior Advisor to the National Center on Intensive Interventions (NCII; [www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org)). Dr. Simonsen's scholarship focuses on supporting educators' implementation of PBIS practices across a continuum of settings.

Before joining the faculty at University of Connecticut in 2005, Dr. Simonsen was the director of a non-public (alternative) school for students with disabilities who presented with challenging educational and behavioral needs. In addition to serving as an administrator and clinician, Dr. Simonsen has previously been certified as a teacher of elementary general education and middle-secondary special education.

## Valerie Close

Principal, Mountain View Elementary School, Roanoke Public Schools, VA



Ms. Valerie Close is an accomplished educator who earned a BS in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in special education and social sciences from Radford University in 2006. With a deep commitment to education, Ms. Close earned National Board Certification and dedicated twelve years to teaching at the elementary level. Valerie actively participated in the early implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as a classroom teacher in Virginia. In 2016, she furthered her academic pursuits at Radford University, obtaining a MS in educational leadership.

In 2018, she transitioned to Roanoke County Public Schools, assuming the role of assistant principal and spearheading Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation as a PBIS coach and administrator. In 2022, Ms. Close elevated her career to principal, championing teacher support through the instruction and demonstration of behavior intervention strategies, fostering a positive school climate, and nurturing a culture aligned with the PBIS framework.

## Elizabeth Mauck

Dean of Students, Northside Middle School, Roanoke Public Schools, VA



This is Ms. Elizabeth Mauck's 18<sup>th</sup> year in education. She graduated from James Madison University with an undergraduate degree in Business and Marketing Education and a Master's degree in the Art of Teaching. For 16 years, Ms. Mauck taught Marketing at Lord Botetourt High School and was the Work-Based Learning Coordinator for Botetourt County Public Schools. She completed her Educational Leadership degree from James Madison University and is excited to be the Dean of Students at Northside High School. Ms. Mauck is passionate about helping students being ready for opportunities while they are in high school and beyond. In her free time, she enjoys camping and traveling with family, cycling, refinishing furniture and watching sports.

## Laura Bell

Assistant Principal, Glenvar Elementary School, Roanoke Public Schools, VA



Mrs. Laura Bell, currently serves as Assistant Principal at Glenvar Elementary School in Roanoke County Public Schools, bringing a wealth of experience and dedication to the realm of education. With a career spanning 16 years as a devoted educator and 2 years as an Assistant Principal, Mrs. Bell has consistently demonstrated her passion for fostering an inclusive and positive learning environment. For the past 5 years, she has served as a distinguished PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) coach, further solidifying her expertise in behavior management and fostering a positive school culture.

Mrs. Bell is deeply passionate about helping students and adults reach their best potential. She firmly believes that all behavior is a form of communication and is driven to empower adults to understand the underlying messages behind children's behavior. Mrs. Bell's approach is grounded in empathy, understanding, and the firm conviction that by comprehending these behaviors, we can create a nurturing and transformative educational experience.

Mrs. Laura Bell holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from Radford University and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from James Madison University equipping her with a strong educational foundation to enact positive change within school communities.

## Tynara Blount

Director of CR-PBIS, School District of Philadelphia, PA



Ms. Tynara Blount is the Director of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CR-PBIS) for the School District of Philadelphia. In this role, Ms. Blount leads a team of 20 district-level CR-PBIS coaches who support over 100 public schools in their implementation of CR-PBIS. Her post graduate career began in the Criminal Justice system where she also volunteered to teach students at a local high school the techniques required to debate a court case. It was this experience with students that inspired her to enter the education field. Fully committed to students, teachers, and leaders, Ms. Blount has dedicated the past 19 years to education to ensure equity and belonging are central to our collective work. Her past experiences include working as a School Transformational Facilitator at Johns Hopkins University. She also brings a wealth of knowledge from her tenure as a Director of Education, high school advanced placement teacher, District CR-PBIS Coach, Lead CR-PBIS Coach, and Assistant Director of CR-PBIS. Ms. Blount earned a BS from West Chester University and a MS from St. Joseph's University. She is a loving mother and a wife, happily married to her husband of nine years. Ms. Blount is a champion and community-centered leader, committed to the daily support of ensuring schools work collaboratively with students, families and community members.

## Sean Kelly

Lead Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Coach, School District of Philadelphia, PA



Mr. Sean Kelly holds a B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Psychology from Pennsylvania State University. He furthered his education by earning a Masters Degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Saint Joseph's University. Mr. Kelly has been working in the educational field for over 10 years. He has held various roles such as Mental Health Professional, School-Based Behavior Specialist, Director of a Therapeutic Extended School Year Program, and is currently working as a Lead Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Coach for the School District of Philadelphia within the Office of School Climate and Culture. Mr. Kelly has a passion for behavioral systems and initiatives that help improve school-wide climate culture and supporting schools with sustaining and enhancing their PBIS implementation.

Mr. Kelly works with school PBIS teams, administrators, and various stakeholders with a heavy focus on PBIS implementation and using school-wide data to problem solve and develop appropriate interventions. In addition, he provides professional development opportunities focused on PBIS implementation and practices. Sean currently resides in Montgomery County with his wife and two children.

## Lu Snyder

Relationships First Coach, School District of Philadelphia, PA



Coach Lu serves the students of Philadelphia through Relationships First, a holistic and MTSS-aligned Restorative Justice climate approach. Her practice focuses on inclusion by using contextual values. Her favorite facilitation is a Harm and Healing Circle, because creating peace in the human experience of conflict embodies justice and restoration.

Ms. Snyder also uses justice practices to develop story-based experiences. With a background in academic benchtop sciences, she uplifts students through kind descriptive words and mastery-based plans. Lu combines Social and Emotional Learning, Project-Based Learning, and Socio-Scientific Issues to foster action and engagement.

## Shannon Ellis

Executive Director, School Climate & Culture Initiatives, School District of Philadelphia, PA



Ms. Shannon Ellis is the Executive Director for School Climate & Culture Initiatives at the School District of Philadelphia. She brings over a decade of experience in urban education systems with an extensive background in social-emotional development, bullying prevention, conflict resolution and behavior change. Ms. Ellis received her B.S. in Business Management with a concentration in Marketing from East Stroudsburg University and M.Ed. in School Psychology from Howard University.